

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1896.—COPYRIGHT, 1896, BY W. E. HEARST.

# A WOMAN CRUSADER COMES TO REFORM NEW YORK.

To Take Up  
the Struggle  
Abandoned Two  
Years Ago by  
Dr. Parkhurst.



To W. E. Hearst, New York Journal:

I have come to New York to begin a thorough and systematic crusade and to collect information and facts which shall arouse the authorities to action and shall lead to legislation for the suppression of vice and the proper regulation of the social evil.

Charlotte Smith,

## SIX THINGS CHARLOTTE SMITH HAS COME TO NEW YORK TO DO.

1. To open a headquarters at No. 24 Union square for the Woman's Rescue League, and take up vigorously the work of reform where Dr. Parkhurst abandoned it.
2. To begin a crusade against vice and immorality and protect the young women of New York from evil influences.
3. To ascertain how, where and with whom the typewriters, waitresses and shop girls of New York spend their evenings.
4. To recruit a bicycle brigade of girls to patrol the streets and boulevards for the purpose of collecting information and evidence of the wicked tendency of bicycling.
5. To establish watchers at the police courts and police stations and to co-operate with public officials, physicians and clergymen to secure information and facts as to the prevalence of vice.
6. To prepare a bill for the Legislature and demand adequate laws for the proper suppression of vice, based upon the facts, statistics and data secured.

Mrs. Charlotte Smith, president of the Woman's Rescue League of America, has mapped out the lines of a great crusade for the moral reformation of New York. She has already taken the first steps to put it into effect, and yesterday selected headquarters at No. 24 Union square. She expects that her organization will require the entire building.

Mrs. Smith will take up the work of moral reform where Dr. Parkhurst left off. Dr. Parkhurst aimed chiefly at one abuse—the degradation of the Police Department. And when that was reformed his work, Mrs. Smith declares, came to an end. Now, she asserts, New York is one of the wickedest cities in the world, and since Dr. Parkhurst's activity ceased we have been slipping back to worse than any former depths of wickedness.

While the notorious "Tenderloin" has been wiped out of existence, Mrs. Smith claims that the conditions existing to-day in uptown districts of New York are as bad as ever. In fact, a new and more insidious engine of evil is now at work—the bicycle. The readers of the Journal are already familiar with Mrs. Charlotte Smith's views on the immoral tendency of bicycling.

The plan and scope of the campaign of the Woman's Rescue League are as comprehensive as President Smith is energetic and resourceful. It is, perhaps, best to state her aims and methods of accomplishing them in her own words, as she outlined them to a representative of the Journal yesterday:

"Nobody who has not had experience in rescue work can form any idea of the insidious and multifarious temptations which encompass pretty girls who are earning their living in this great city. They need a protecting arm. They need sympathy, protection and guidance. It is because of the lack of these that they so often go wrong."

"I want to know," continued Mrs. Smith, before starting on a trip to Coney Island, "how the waitresses, typewriters and pretty shop girls of New York spend their evenings. I want to look into these little trips to Coney Island, about which I have been hearing. I want to know where these dinners by the sea are eaten, how the evenings are spent and what the summer temptations of New York are to a girl who has no home restraints and as many opportunities of making male acquaintances as come in the way of the typewriters, waitresses and others working downtown in the daytime."

"From what I have been hearing from physicians, priests and clergymen, this Coney Island needs looking into. I want to witness those scenes on the boats and on the last trains coming to the city, and I want to learn what happens when the last boat is missed."

Coney Island and the contributory part it plays in the immorality of this city is but one of many agencies for evil which Mrs. Smith is concerned about. She admits that so far as the bicyclists are concerned, the missing of the last boat or train from the island is not so important a matter.

The immense bicycle brigade of New York will be one object of her attention. She says bicycling is immoral in its tendencies, and has already caused the ruin of thousands of young girls in this and other cities. An unmistakable agent for evil is what Mrs. Smith calls bicycling. She says that it has entirely revolutionized the manner and demeanor of young girls.

The bicycle, she declares, introduced a new and unmodest style of dressing. Girls now go about in bloomers who would have been arrested for wearing such a costume had they appeared in it ten years ago. The road houses and the free and easy manners that obtain among bicyclists help along, says Mrs. Smith, the Devil's work, and that from a glass of sarsaparilla it is but a step to a refreshing glass of beer, and that "when one glass has been taken the descent is short and swift."

In order to find out exactly what is going on in the bicycling world Mrs. Smith has devised a bold and original scheme which she is now rapidly putting into execution. She is organizing a bicycle corps of young women of her acquaintance to work in conjunction with the Woman's Rescue League. These pretty young reformers will wear no badge of office. They will not be habited in any uniform. They will simply dress themselves up prettily and mount their wheels and ride out the Boulevard to find out what is going on among New York's countless army of bicycle women.

"These are to be young women whom I can trust," said Mrs. Smith in speaking of her plan. "I do not want any strangers. I will only take those whom I know and who have worked with me in the past."

Mrs. Smith was asked how many of these bicycle girls she intended to call to her aid, and whether she was bringing them from Washington or securing them in New York. She refused to disclose further details at present.

"I will simply say this," she said, "that I am going to work in a systematic manner to secure the facts as to what is going on among the women bicyclists of New York. I suspect that these facts will show, but I am going to fortify myself with the proofs first. I am going to show in a way in which it never has been shown exactly what this new bicycle craze is doing."

"The priests, the clergymen and the physicians of New York already know, or, if they do not know, they must suspect. I have already secured a mass of information from doctors and ministers, who learn in a confidential way the dire results of evil companionship to which the bicycle has opened up the way."

"What has become of all the evil women driven out of resorts by the Parkhurst crusade in New York? Is it not a fact that they have been driven to the streets, and that many of them are now riding the bicycle? Go up along the Boulevard any afternoon and you will see arrayed in their costliest and prettiest gowns, the familiar faces of the Tenderloin. Take a trip through Central Park and closely scrutinize the faces of the women wearing bloomers and riding their wheels in and out among the vehicles. Any sergeant of police who had spent a moment among this crowd of women bicyclists would soon recognize the leaders of New York's outcasts."

"For it is of course useless to pretend that New York has been purified by the Parkhurst crusade and that there is no vice now existing in this city. Every well-informed person will tell you that vice flourishes here as much now as ever before. It is impossible to stamp out the social evil in any city as large as New York. It is simply absurd to claim that the Parkhurst crusade accomplished anything further than a reformation of the Police Department. So far as vice and immorality are concerned, it has not made a particle of difference, except possibly so far as appearances go."

Mrs. Smith constantly asks what has become of the women who were driven out by the Parkhurst crusade. The answer to this she says she is going to supply in a way that will startle our legislators. One of her present plans is to learn exactly how the conditions of vicious life in this city have been changed. Mrs. Smith has heard about what goes on in the flat houses uptown, and of some of the curious tenants who have been renting apartments during the past two or three years.

"I am going to inquire for rooms and for apartments," said she, with a gesture of earnest determination. "I am going to find out the hotels where guests who have no baggage are taken without question. I am going to learn where the apartment houses are that make a specialty of questionable tenants who pay high rents, and where no objection is raised to noisy parties every evening."

"I am going to learn who are the landlords who take tenants without any question as to character, and who, on the other hand, have every reason to believe that these tenants are disreputable and that they intend to use the flats for improper purposes. It would not surprise me a great deal to discover, as I intend I expect to find, that these landlords include some of the most prominent citizens, and that the wages of sin are finding their way into the pockets of the most distinguished families in the metropolis."

"Then there are places where rooms are rented on easy terms, so far as references to character are concerned. These places, which I am led to believe abound in the most populous parts of New York and which have been rapidly increasing in number during the past year, offer every facility for the spread of immorality. They will be unearthed and tabulated by me. I am going to find out all about them."

The typewriters, the shop girls and the waitresses of New York, who constitute a large army among themselves, are going to be the especial objects of Mrs. Smith's attention this Fall. She intends to find out all about how they spend their evenings, with the object of removing them from the ways of evil, if that be possible.

"The bicycle," Mrs. Smith says, "has opened up the way to forming a large acquaintance among men by frivolous girls and others whom they have induced to attend the bicycle academies and take a spin on the road. The fruits of the harvest will be reaped in New York this Fall. The army of the fallen will be recruited by large numbers of young girls whose downfall has been accomplished by this new device."

"With male acquaintances picked up on the road or in the bicycle academies there will be many new forms of temptation thrown in their way. There are the roof gardens and the parks, not to speak of the moonlight rides along the boulevards and the Riverside Drive. How do the poor waitresses get these expensive bicycles and fine clothes, and why have they so many male admirers?"

Mrs. Smith says she will waste no attention on the thirty-five-year-old bloomer girl or the elderly maiden who only wears bloomers in an effort to look young. The young and loving girls of twenty and thereabouts are to be her especial charge.

Mrs. Smith has not yet made up her mind exactly what kind of a law is needed to regulate bicycling among young girls, but she says she will know better after her bicycle brigade has secured the information she is after. She expects as a result of her campaign this Fall to have several bills ready for presentation to the Legislature by the first of January.

"One New York Senator has agreed to present these measures for me," said Mrs. Smith. "The bills will be presented and then sent to committees. It is to these committees that I expect to reveal the information I am now going to collect."

A large mass of detailed, definite, reliable and authentic facts showing the exact condition of affairs will be needed to offset the prejudice that will be raised against me. This is exactly what I expect to get by the wholesale investigation I am about to begin in New York. I will get such facts that there can be no question as to the need of legislation to remedy the existing evils.

"I do not expect any aid from Dr. Parkhurst, who is now abroad spending the summer and neglecting the work he ought to have carried on. His campaign appears to have come to a standstill, and it is high time that it be taken up and pushed through to its logical conclusion."

The "logical conclusion" to which Mrs. Smith referred was, she said, the proper regulation of the social evil. In place of a misdirected effort to stamp it out, when history shows that such an attempt is useless. She favors some system whereby the authorities can keep a close watch on disreputable resorts and their inmates.

This, she thinks, can best be accomplished by the issuance of some sort of official license to the proprietors of such places. For any infractions of the rule laid down by the police such license might be taken away and the place closed out of business. At the same time the most stringent rules might be made up. At the same time the most stringent rules might be made up and enforced.

Instead of decoying young girls, as at present, Mrs. Smith says such a plan would make the proprietors agents of the police in enforcing reform measures, and that in this way innumerable young girls would be saved.